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ABSTRACT

Questionnaires were mailed to 80 administrative units in the western United States, of which 85% responded, to examine administrative arrangements for administering special education programs in rural areas and to determine whether a relationship existed between administrative arrangement, cooperative size, and compliance with the mandates of P.L. 94-142 (The 1975 Education for All Handicapped Children Act). Five administrative arrangements were examined: individual and special school districts, voluntary and joint agreement cooperatives, and legislated units. Size was defined by geographical area and number of school districts served by the cooperative unit. Respondents were randomly selected from listings of special education cooperatives and copies of legislation enabling cooperative arrangements provided by state departments of education. Results indicated that individual school districts reported the greatest degree of compliance with the mandates; voluntary cooperatives were most effective in meeting the mandates; and rural areas experienced the most difficulty complying with mandates regarding personnel knowledge of special education laws and procedures, and the least difficulty with the procedures and components related to the Individualized Education Plan. Since 88% of the administrative units served less than 15 school districts, analysis of the relationship between number of school districts and compliance with the mandates was not attempted. (NQA)

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Special Education in Rural Areas

Sandra Silver

Joint Doctoral Program

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The passage of PL94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, brought with it a burgeoning of cooperative arrangements for the provision and administration of special education programs in rural areas. The reason behind this unprecedented growth was twofold. First, handicapped children could no longer be denied a free appropriate public education. Realizing that the provision of adequate special education services within an individual rural school district was often unfeasible because of a widely scattered and extremely diverse special education population and an absence of resources, cooperative arrangements seemed a logical alternative. Second, the requirement that each application for PL94-142 monies be for a minimum of $7500 fostered collaboration. Many small rural school districts were unable individually to generate sufficient allocations to receive these funds. Realizing that the mandates of the law were admirable goals and that the allocated monies would prove beneficial in providing adequate services to handicapped children within their jurisdiction, some form of cooperative arrangement seemed like an appropriate solution for many small rural school districts. Consequently, cooperative arrangements grew rapidly in sparsely populated areas.

Currently, some form of regional cooperative educational arrangement exists in 33 of the states in this country. They differ however in size, role, and structure. Cooperative arrangements may include as few 7 or as many as 81 individual school districts. In addition, they vary in type of services rendered and professional personnel employed. Some cooperatives serve entirely as advisory agencies, while others are extremely regulatory. Special education services are generally included within the cooperative arrangement often forming the primary service goal.

Economy of scale is often presented as the rationale for cooperative arrangements in rural areas. Such arrangements permit a wider range of

special education services to be offered more efficiently and effectively than would be possible in a single school district. Specialized personnel are also shared among the member school districts.

Regional cooperatives are not, however, a panacea for the administrative difficulties that plague special education in rural areas. Cooperative arrangements are fraught with controversy over such issues as: locus of decision making control; physical location of the unit; and personnel administration. Cooperatives may also experience transportation difficulties and goal displacement and thus fail to increase efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, school districts will sometimes experience a loss of ownership and pride in cooperative programs and may even abrogate all responsibility for special education programs to the cooperative unit.

The need for detailed study of current administrative arrangements regarding special education programs in rural areas is clear (Jordan, 1966; Sanche, 1972; Northwest Regional Development Laboratory, 1973; Moore, 1975; Helge, 1981; Strutz and Monk, 1981; Parks, Ross, and Just, 1982;). However, a review of the current literature on special education in rural areas reveals that detailed study of administrative arrangements has failed to materialize. Most of the literature on this topic, according to Sanche (1972), should be considered scholarship rather than research as it provides descriptive rather than empirical data. Sher (1977, p. 123) calls for "an evaluation of the regional educational service agency in both theory and practice.", while Strutz and Monk (1981) call for research on rural school management structure to determine the most effective organizational patterns for small districts. Helge (1984, p. 305) also supports "investigation and information dissemination concerning alternative delivery systems that are effective and, when possible, cost effective." Thus the present study attempts to address this research need.

Research Hypotheses

This study is aimed at discovering the types of arrangements that exist for the administration of special education programs in rural areas. It also attempts to discover whether a relationship exists between, administrative arrangement, cooperative size, and compliance with the mandates of PL94-142, The Education for all Handicapped Children Act of 1975.

To accomplish this task, the literature on rural special education cooperatives was examined. Within this literature, eight types of administrative arrangements emerge. These are: (1) regional state agencies where administrative authority remains with the state department of education; (2) formal intermediate units, the second level of a three-tier state educational hierarchy; (3) special school districts, enabled by state legislation to provide designated specialized services in a given area; (4) voluntary cooperatives with administrative authority granted by the local school districts to a new unit of administrative authority that undertakes responsibility for provision and administration of special education services; (5) joint agreement cooperatives, an undertaking by two or more local school districts to provide special education services on a regional basis with administrative authority remaining at the local level; (6) satellite cooperatives where one school district provides special education administrative services to a group of neighboring school districts; (7) school study councils (also called school development councils), a loose confederation of local school districts under the sponsorship of a local college of education whose purpose is to solve defined educational problems existing in member schools and (8) individual school districts.

Ten components necessary for a successful rural special education cooperative also emerge from the literature on rural special education cooperatives. These are: (1) legislation enabling cooperative development; (2)

maintenance of local ownership of cooperative programs; (3) a spirit of cooperation among member school districts; (4) protection of local autonomy; (5) dedicated leadership; (6) mission clarity; (7) ongoing planning; (8) clear lines of responsibility; (9) real delegation of authority and responsibility; and (10) an adequate financial base. Hence, this study will examine different types of administrative arrangements and attempt to determine which arrangements are most effective in implementing mandated special education administrative procedures in rural areas.

Cooperative size is another variable addressed by this study. Despite school district reorganization, many rural school districts still fail to generate an adequate population base to provide comprehensive special education programs. The literature on rural education argues the merits of various size school districts and recommends cooperative undertakings for the provision of equal educational opportunities. Although the difficulties associated with the provision of special education services in rural areas are discussed (Sher, 1977; Schrag, 1979; Seager et. al., 1980; Veselka, 1980; Cole and Rankin, 1981; Helge, 1983), no mention is made regarding the effects of size on rural cooperative endeavors.

For the purposes of this study, size has been defined by two factors; geographical area, and number of school districts served by the cooperative unit. The rationale behind selection of these factors is that; large geographical distances generate increased transportation time and costs, and a greater number of member school districts will generate more diverse needs thereby reducing the efficiency and effectiveness of the rural special education cooperative. Hence, it is hypothesized that cooperatives with fewer school districts and smaller geographical domains will exhibit greater compliance with the mandated special education procedures.

Research Design

This survey was constructed using the Total Design Method recommended by Dillman (1978). The items were generated from the compliance manual used by the United States Department of Education in monitoring State Education Agencies for compliance with the mandates of PL94-142. Once completed, the survey was submitted to various professors of special education, members of county offices of education, and one member of the Federal Office of Education for review and comments. Revisions were made according to suggestions received.

The survey sample was obtained by writing to each State Department of Education in the Western United States and requesting a listing of special education cooperatives along with a copy of legislation enabling cooperative arrangements. These listings were first examined to determine if cooperatives served primarily rural areas. For the purposes of this study, a school district or cooperative was considered rural when located in a county with less than 150 inhabitants per square mile or when more than 60% of the county inhabitants resided in rural areas (as defined and measured by the United States Census Bureau). Cities containing over 10,000 inhabitants and areas that are part of a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area were eliminated from the sample. All school districts and cooperatives serving primarily urban and suburban school districts were also eliminated from this study.

While listings were obtained from each state department of education, these listings sometimes provided names and addresses of all special education directors within the state. Some states indicated when listings were cooperatives while others did not. Hence for several states it was impossible to determine if a listing constituted a cooperative arrangement or an individual school district. When this occurred, the listing was included in the sample population.

For legislation enabling cooperative ventures, a similar phenomenon occurred. While some state sent copies of legislation, others did not. In addition, in some states, the type of cooperative arrangement was not specified making it impossible to determine either size or governance structure of listed cooperatives. Hence, a systematic sampling method was employed with the first cooperative selected using a table of random numbers, and every third listing thereafter selected, thereby generating a sample of 80 respondents.

The procedures for mailing the questionnaire followed the Total Design Method recommended by Dillman. The survey along with a cover letter (individually typed by a computer terminal with daisy wheel printer) and a self-addressed stamped envelope was mailed to each subject selected for this study. Each questionnaire was assigned an identification number located in the upper right hand corner of the front page for the purposes of follow-up procedures.

As recommended by Dillman, mailings took place on Tuesday. One week after the original mailing, a postcard serving as a thank you to those who responded and as a reminder for those who had not was mailed. Four weeks after the first mailing, a letter and replacement questionnaire was sent to all non-respondents. At the end of eight weeks, an 85% return rate had been obtained. Therefore the third and final mailing recommended by Dillman was eliminated.

Results

While the literature on administration of special education programs in rural areas describes eight types of administrative arrangements, the results of this survey revealed that one arrangement, the school study council, does not exist in the Western United States. The most frequent administrative arrangement found in this study was the individual school district reported 33% of the time. Single county school districts reported 6% of the time were included in this category. Intermediate school districts were reported 20% of the time, while voluntary cooperatives were reported 19% of the time. Joint agreement cooperatives followed with an incidence rate of 12%, while special school districts occurred 10% of the time. Regional state agencies and satellite cooperatives respectively constituted 3% and 2% of the sample population. Thus, for analysis regional state agencies were combined with intermediate units as both constitute legislated agencies granted administrative authority by the state. Satellite cooperatives were combined with voluntary cooperatives as in both arrangements administrative authority is granted by the member school districts to an administrative unit. Hence the relationship of five administrative arrangements: (1) legislated units; (2) special school districts; (3) voluntary cooperatives; (4) joint agreement cooperatives; and (5) individual school districts to compliance with the mandates of PL 94-142, The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975, in rural areas were analyzed.

In relationship to size, 88% of the administrative units surveyed served less than 15 school districts, 11% served 15 to 29 school districts, and only 1% served more than 30 school districts. Because of the preponderance of administrative arrangements serving less than 15 school districts, the relationship between number of school districts and compliance with the mandates of PL94-142 was not investigated.

For geographical area, 16% of the respondents served an area under 100

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square miles, 24% served an area of 100-499 square miles, 12% covered an area of 500-1000 square miles, while 48% covered an area greater than 1000 square miles. No significant relationship emerged between type of administrative unit and square mileage covered.

The areas that proved least difficult for rural administrative units in complying with the mandates of PL94-142 were: obtaining parental permission to assess students suspected of having special needs which always occurred 97% of the time; having the mandated components on the individual education plan where long range goals were always included 97% of the time, short term objectives 98% of the time, extent of participation in the regular classroom 91% of the time, the date of service initiation 95% of the time, and the child's present level of functioning 86% of the time; parental approval was always obtained before placement 95% of the time; assessments were always performed by qualified personnel 89% of the time; IEP's were always reviewed on a yearly basis 88% of the time; multiple placement criterion were always used 86% of the time; efforts to reconcile differences with parents of children diagnosed as having special needs always occurred 86% of the time; and due process procedures were always in existence 86% of the time.

Rural areas experienced the most difficulty complying with special education mandates regarding personnel knowledge of special education laws and procedures. Only 11% of those surveyed reported that regular education personnel always understood special education diagnostic procedures, while 15% always understood special education placement procedures. Additionally, only 14% of the respondents reported that regular education teachers were always prepared to handle special needs students in the regular classroom and that regular educators always took responsibility for special needs students placed in their classrooms 40% of the time. This may be due in part to the survey

finding that in-service programs for regular education personnel on special education matters always occurred only 19% of the time, and also the reported incidence of regular education teachers always obtaining suggestions for handling children referred for evaluation but 40% of the time. Furthermore, special education teachers always knew special education laws only 42% of the time, while cooperative personnel always knew these laws 45% of the time. In-service always occurred for special education personnel 27% of the time. On the administrative level, building principals were reported as always understanding special education procedures 32% of the time, and always understanding special education laws 40% of the time. District superintendents were reported as always understanding special education procedures 45% of the time, while understanding special education laws 39% of the time. In-service education was always offered to administrative personnel 24% of the time. Other areas of difficulty included completion of assessments within the 30 day time span specified by PL94-142. The survey results showed that this time span was always adhered to 43% of the time.

Factor analysis was then performed resulting in the composition of five scales: (1) assessment of students referred for special education services; (2) attendance at meetings concerning programming for children requiring special education services; (3) programming for students determined to be in need of special education and related services; (4) having the mandated components appear on the IEP form; and (5) knowledge of special education rules and regulations.

Of the sixteen items proposed for assessing children with special needs, eleven items accounted for 94% of the variance and were included in the scale. These were: (1) child find activities exist (38%); (2) classroom alternatives are tried before referring a child for special education services (11%); (3) parents

of children referred for special education services receive an explanation of their rights under PL94-142 (8%); (4) parental permission is obtained before assessing any child referred for special education services (7%); (5) children are assessed by qualified, licensed personnel (6%); (6) assessments are conducted by multidisciplinary teams (5%); (7) no single procedure is used as sole placement criteria for special education purposes (5%); (8) assessments are performed in the child's native language (4%); (9) assessments are performed in all areas of suspected disability (4%); (10) assessments are completed within the thirty day time limit specified by PL94-142 (3%); and (11) minority reports are filed whenever a member of the multidisciplinary team disagrees with the findings of a specific learning disability (3%).

Of the nine items proposed for the programming scale, three variables accounted for 100% of the variance and were included in this scale. These were: (1) an IEP is in effect at the beginning of the school year (58%); (2) the child is placed in a classroom appropriate to his/her special needs (27%); and (3) a continuum of placement alternatives is available for children in need of special education and related services (15%).

Of the ten items proposed for attendance at meetings concerning programming for children in need of special education services, seven items accounted for 92% of the variance and were included in this scale. These were: (1) the child's parent(s) attend the IEP review meeting (31%); (2) the child's teacher attends the IEP review meeting (17%); (3) an administrative representative attends the IEP review meeting (14%); (4) the child's teacher attends the IEP meeting (11%); (5) the child's parent(s) attends the IEP meeting (9%); (6) an administrative representative attends the IEP meeting (5%); and (7) due process procedures exist (5%).

Of the ten items proposed for the IEP component scale nine items

accounted for 100% of the variance and were included in this scale. These were: (1) the IEP contains the child's present level of functioning (37%); (2) the IEP contains long range goals (20%); (3) the IEP contains short term objective (10%); (4) the IEP contains the extent of the child's participation in the regular classroom (9%); (5) the IEP contains the date of service initiation (8%); (6) the IEP contains the anticipated duration of special education services (5%); (7) the IEP contains all required special education and related services (5%); (8) an IEP meeting is held within 30 days of the determination of a need for special education and related services (3%); and (9) every child receiving special education and related services is reevaluated at least once every three years (2%).

For the special education knowledge scale, five of the proposed nineteen items accounted for 100% of the variance and were included in the scale. These were: (1) building principals understand special education laws (46%); (2) building principals understand special education evaluation procedures (22%); (3) building principals understand special education placement procedures (14%); (4) district superintendents understand special education laws (11%); and (5) district superintendents understand special education procedures (7%).

Reliability assessments were then performed, and alpha was computed for

each of the resultant scales.

TABLE 1

SCALE RELIABILITY ASSESSMENT

SCALE	ALPHA	STANDARDIZED ITEM ALPHA
ASSESSMENT	80%	82%
PROGRAMMING	78%	82%
ATTENDANCE	76%	77%
IEP COMPONENT	71%	76%
KNOWLEDGE	84%	83%

Next, the data was examined to discover if any relationship existed between type of administrative arrangement and any of the five scales (see table 2). For assessment of children referred for special education services, the individual school district reported the greatest degree of compliance, followed by the voluntary cooperative, the joint agreement cooperative, the legislated unit, and the special school district. The IEP component scale revealed that the voluntary cooperative reported the greatest degree of compliance in this area followed closely by the individual school district, and the joint agreement cooperative. The legislated unit trailed behind while the special school district reported the least amount of compliance on this scale. For the programming scale, the voluntary cooperative reported the greatest degree of compliance followed closely by the individual school district, the joint agreement cooperative, and the legislated unit. Once again, the special school district reported the greatest difficulty in complying with this area of PL94-142. For the knowledge scale, the individual school district reported the greatest degree of compliance followed by the joint agreement cooperative, the voluntary cooperative, the special school district, and finally the legislated unit. No

significant difference was discovered between the components of the IEP and the type of administrative arrangement.

TABLE 2

ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT

SCALE	KENDALL'S TAU	SIGNIFICANCE
ASSESSMENT	-.36	<.01
PROGRAMMING	-.20	.04
MEETING ATTENDANCE	-.22	.02
IEP COMPONENTS	-.18	.06
KNOWLEDGE	-.39	<.01

Next, size (square mileage) was examined in relationship to each of the proposed scales. No significant differences were noted between square mileage and compliance with any of the five scales (see table 3).

TABLE 3

SQUARE MILEAGE

SCALE	KENDALL'S TAU	SIGNIFICANCE
ASSESSMENT	.04	.38
PROGRAMMING	.14	.12
MEETING ATTENDANCE	-.01	.46
IEP COMPONENT	.01	.47
KNOWLEDGE	.12	.16

Discussion

The results of this study show that in rural areas, the individual school district reports the greatest degree of compliance with the mandates of PL94-142. This result is somewhat surprising given the sparse population base, lack of resources, and constant push for consolidation and cooperation among rural school districts. One possible explanation for this phenomena is the report by some respondents that when services are not available at the local level, cooperative, state, and contract agreement solutions are sought. Also, some of the respondents in this category were county wide school districts that while classified as a single administrative unit would have greater resources at their disposal than an individual rural school district. In addition, some responding individual school districts were also part of a cooperative arrangement (as reported by at least one respondent) while others were not (as evidenced by at least one respondent who reported being in the process of investigating joining a cooperative, and several respondents who revealed they did not belong to a cooperative). The inability of this survey to differentiate among these situations may have led to this result, when the isolated rural school district that is not part of a county or cooperative unit may indeed experience greater difficulty complying with the mandates of PL94-142.

For the four types of cooperative arrangements investigated, the voluntary cooperative where administrative authority is granted by member school districts to a new unit of administrative authority was reported to be the most effective in meeting the mandates of PL94-142, followed by the joint agreement cooperative where administrative authority is not granted to the unit. The legislated unit (comprised of both intermediate school districts and regional state agencies) proved less effective while the special school district related the greatest degree of difficulty complying with the mandates of PL94-142. This

result is not surprising given the traditional rural opposition to interference by the government in local matters. Thus it appears that voluntary agreements lead to greater compliance with the mandates of PL94-142 than do mandated arrangements. Furthermore, for maximum effectiveness it appears that both voluntary agreement, and delegation of power are necessary, as evidenced by the greater degree of compliance found in the voluntary cooperative as opposed to the joint agreement cooperative. This result is not surprising as the joint agreement cooperative exists as purely a service agency and in reality has little or no authority over programs housed within the individual member school districts.

This study did not evince any difference in compliance with the mandates of PL94-142 based on geographical size. This may have resulted from inadequate size differentiation as illustrated by the majority of respondents falling into the over 1000 square mile category that (as reported by one respondent) included cooperatives covering 8000 square miles. Hence, to measure the relationship of compliance with geographical area, it would be necessary to redefine the size categories to more accurately differentiate between the geographical size of rural cooperatives. The same would be true for analyzing the relationship between the number of member school districts and compliance with the mandates of PL94-142. Here too, the categories chosen did not serve to adequately differentiate the respondents and since 88% of the respondents fell into a single category analysis of the relationship between number of member school districts and compliance with the mandates of PL94-142 was not attempted.

Many of the items that gave rural areas the least difficulty dealt with the procedures and components related to the Individualized Education Plan. This may have occurred in part due to the report that forms were sometimes pro-

vided by the State Department of Education. These forms in turn would aid in increasing compliance in areas related to the IEP.

Rural areas reported the most difficulty on items that dealt with personnel knowledge of special education rules and regulations. Several respondents reported that much time is spent on in-service education, however, the material presented is often not absorbed. Other respondents claimed that many regular education teachers were not prepared to deal with special needs students placed in the regular classroom and blamed the teacher training institutions. Blame was also placed on teacher training programs for lack of special educator knowledge of mandated rules and regulations. Inability to find qualified special education staff may also have contributed to some of the difficulty experienced in meeting the mandates of PL94-142. Other contributory factors cited by respondents were distance, sparsity, and lack of adequate funding to meet special education mandates.

In summary, the most effective type of cooperative arrangement for implementing mandated special education administrative procedures appears to be the voluntary cooperative unit that has been delegated administrative authority by its member school districts. However, as one respondent commented, "Rural districts sometimes don't know the value of co-ops. Our voluntary arrangement is somewhat of a problem because those wanting to drop out are generally those who need it most."

Additional study in this area is warranted to determine if the same relationship between administrative arrangement and compliance with the mandates of PL94-142 would be replicated. Furthermore, refinement of size categories in relationship to survey results would serve to elucidate whether a relationship exists between geographical size, number of school districts, and compliance with the mandates of PL94-142. In this manner, a best practices

model would begin to emerge regarding the effective delivery of special education services through cooperative arrangements in rural areas.

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Department of Special Education
Room 104, Education Building
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway
San Francisco, California 94132
June 26, 1984

Dear Special Education Director;

As part of a doctoral program in Special Education Administration at San Francisco State University, I am conducting a survey regarding the relationship of size and type of cooperative to the provision of special education services to handicapped children residing in rural areas.

As a student interested in rural special education, I have become aware of the lack of research in this area. The need for research has been decreed in many of the articles which I have read. This need is only beginning to be heard. I hope that this study will aid in filling the research gap which currently exists in the rural special education literature.

Please complete the enclosed form at your earliest convenience and return it in the stamped, self-addressed envelope provided. Each survey has been assigned a number to help in conducting follow up. Please be assured that your answers will remain confidential.

Thank you for your kind cooperation. Your return of the enclosed questionnaire is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sandra Silver
Doctoral Student

Department of Special Education
Room 104-Education Building
San Francisco State University
1600 Holloway
San Francisco, CA 94132
July 24, 1984

About a month ago I wrote to you concerning a study I am conducting regarding the provision of special education services to handicapped students residing in rural areas. As of today, your completed questionnaire has not been received.

This study has been undertaken due to the lack of information available regarding the administration of special education programs in rural areas. The need for research on this topic is noted repeatedly throughout the special education literature. While this research need is beginning to be addressed, it is hoped that this study will aid in filling the research gap and understanding the difficulties encountered when attempting to provide special education services to handicapped children residing in rural areas.

I am writing to you again because of the significance of each questionnaire to the interpretation of the data received. Your name was drawn using a random sampling technique from a listing of rural special education directors in the Western United States. Thus in order for the results of this survey to be truly representative it is essential that each person in the sample return their questionnaire.

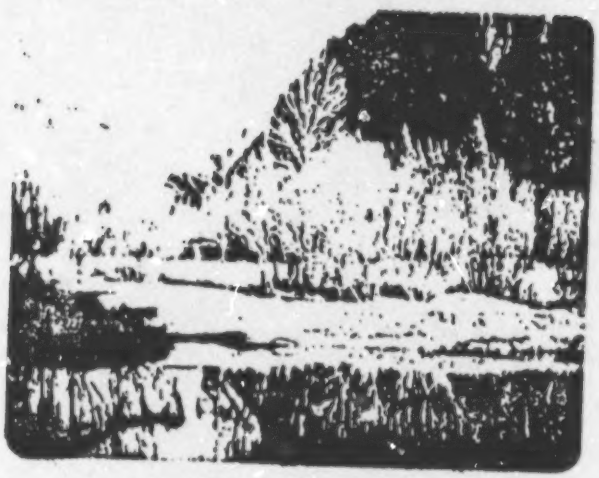
In the event you have been on vacation, or our letters have crossed in the mail, please forgive my impatience. If by chance your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement questionnaire is enclosed.

Your cooperation in completing this survey is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sandra Silver
Doctoral Student

SPECIAL EDUCATION IN RURAL AMERICA



This study is aimed at understanding the difficulties encountered by rural school districts in providing services to handicapped children in need of special education and related services. Your time and cooperation is greatly appreciated.

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The first section concerns providing **EDUCATIONAL SERVICES** to handicapped children. Realizing that within a give cooperative, educational services may vary from school district to school district, in this section please answer these questions in a manner which reflects the **OVERALL** situation in your cooperative. Please answer all questions. If you wish to comment on any of the questions, please feel free to use the space in the margins. Your comments will be read and taken into account.

The first set of **EDUCATIONAL SERVICE** questions concerns the **ASSESSMENT** of students referred for special education services. *Please circle the category which you feel most accurately describes the overall situation throughout your cooperative.*

(Please circle)

1.) Activities designed to locate, identify, and evaluate handicapped children exist.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

2.) Children are referred for special education and related services only after the resources of the regular school program have been considered.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

3.) Parental rights are explained to the parents of each child referred for special education evaluation.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

4.) Written parental permission is obtained prior to initiating special education assessment procedures.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

(Please circle)

5.) An individual assessment by qualified, licensed personnel is conducted for each child referred for special education services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

6.) Evaluations are conducted by multidisciplinary team.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

7.) No single procedure is used as sole criterion for placement in a special education program.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

8.) Tests are administered in the child's native language.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

9.) Tests administered address specific areas of educational need.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

10.) Assessments are completed in all areas of suspected disability.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

11.) Assessment procedures are completed within 30 calendar days of receipt of parental permission to assess.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

(Please circle)

12.) A written report of assessment results is prepared by each person who evaluates the child.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

13.) For children with a suspected learning disability, a classroom observation is performed by someone other than the child's regular classroom teacher.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

14.) For children with learning disabilities, a written report of evaluation results including a statement of determination of a learning disability and the basis for making the determination exists.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

15.) For learning disabled children, each team member certified in writing that the evaluation report reflects his/her conclusions.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

16.) A separate statement is submitted by a team member if the above report does not reflect his/her conclusions.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The next section concerns **PLACEMENT** of children determined to be in need of special education services.

Please circle the category which you feel most accurately describes the overall situation in your cooperative.

(Please circle)

17.) An IEP meeting is held within 30 calendar days of determination of a need for special education services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

18.) The following people participate in the IEP meeting:

a.) the child's teacher.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

b.) the child's parent(s).....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

c.) evaluation personnel.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

d.) administrative representative.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

e.) other (please specify) _____.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

19.) When it is determined that a special education need exists, a written IEP is completed prior to the provision of services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

(Please circle)

20.) An IEP is implemented for each child diagnosed as having special education needs as soon as possible following the IEP meeting....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

21.) Written parental approval is obtained prior to placing any student in a special education program....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

22.) Students diagnosed as having special education needs are placed in appropriate classes.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

23.) Student placement is based on a written IEP.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

24.) If parents disagree with the team decision, attempts are made to reconcile differences.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

25.) Due process procedures consistent with state and federal requirements are in place.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The next section concerns **PROGRAMMING** for students determined to be in need of special education services.

Please circle the category that most closely describes the overall situation in your cooperative.

(Please circle)

26.) A continuum of alternative placements including regular class, special class, home instruction, hospital and institution, and support services in the regular classroom is available.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

27.) Children are educated in the regular classroom to the maximum extent possible.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

28.) An IEP is in effect at the beginning of the schools year for each child receiving special education services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

29.) The written IEP contains:

a.) child's present level of performance.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

b.) goals.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

c.) objectives.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

d.) required special services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

e.) participation in regular programs.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

f.) date of service initiation.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

g.) anticipated duration of services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

(Please circle)

30.) IEP's are reviewed and/or revised at least yearly.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

31.) The following people attend the meeting to review or revise the IEP:

a.) the child's teacher.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

b.) the child's parent(s).....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

c.) evaluation personnel.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

d.) administrative representative.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

e.) other (please specify) _____.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

32.) Children receiving special education services are reevaluated at least once every three years.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

33.) Continuous evaluation of the effects of special education programs to insure high quality programs are made regularly.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

(Please circle)

39.) Regular classroom teachers take responsibility for the education of each handicapped child while he/she is in the regular classroom.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

40.) All personnel serving handicapped children are qualified and hold appropriate credentials to teach the children placed in their classrooms.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

41.) Special education teachers have been provided information concerning building special education referral procedures.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

42.) Special education teachers know special education legal requirements.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

43.) Building principals are aware of special education referral procedures.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

44.) Building principals understand special education evaluation procedures.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

45.) Building principals understand special education placement procedures.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

(Please circle)

6.) District superintendents are aware of district procedures for the determination of eligibility for special education services.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

7.) District superintendents are knowledgeable concerning special education legal requirements.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

8.) Cooperative personnel are aware of special education referral procedures for each building they serve.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

9.) Cooperative personnel are knowledgeable about special education legal requirements.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

10.) Cooperative personnel hold in-service programs regarding special education requirements for:

a.) regular education personnel.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

b.) special education personnel.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

c.) administrative personnel.....-> ALWAYS USUALLY OFTEN SOMETIMES NEVER

The next set of questions is aimed at understanding the administrative SERVICES provided by your agency.

Please circle the number of each category that applies.

51.) My cooperative serves as a(n):

1 SERVICE AGENCY

2 ADVISORY AGENCY

3 ADMINISTRATIVE AGENCY

4 REGULATORY AGENCY

52.) My cooperative provides the following administrative services:

1 BUDGET FORMATION

2 BUDGET REVIEW

3 SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN FORMATION

4 SPECIAL EDUCATION PLAN REVIEW

5 PROGRAM SUPERVISION

6 IN-SERVICE EDUCATION

7 OTHER (Please specify)_____

8 _____

9 _____

53.) My cooperative provides the following services:

	(Please circle)
Psychological.....	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Social Work.....	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Speech and Language.....	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Adaptive Phys. Ed.....	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Occupational Therapy.....	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Physical Therapy.....	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Special Education Teacher (Please specify area(s))	
_____	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
_____	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
_____	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
Other (Please specify)	
_____	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
_____	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE
_____	DIAGNOSTIC CONSULTANT DIRECT SERVICE

The last set of questions asks you to DESCRIBE your cooperative. This information will be used only in analyzing the data. Please rest assured that your answers will remain confidential.

Please *circle* the number of the item that most accurately describes your agency.

54.) The number of school districts in my cooperative is:

1 LESS THAN 15

2 15-29

3 30-49

4 OVER 50

55.) The square mileage covered by my cooperative is:

1 LESS THAN 100 SQUARE MILES

2 100-499 SQUARE MILES

3 500-999 SQUARE MILES

4 OVER 1000 SQUARE MILES

56.) My agency is best described as:

1 A REGIONAL STATE AGENCY

2 A FORMAL INTERMEDIATE UNIT
(the second level in a three tier state system)

3 A SPECIAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

4 A VOLUNTARY COOPERATIVE
(administrative authority has been granted to the cooperative by member school districts)

5 JOINT AGREEMENT COOPERATIVE
(service and advice are provided, administrative authority remains at the local school district level)

6 A SATELLITE COOPERATIVE
(Special education administrative services are provided by one school district to a number of small school districts in close proximity)

7 A SCHOOL STUDY COUNCIL
(also called school development councils)

8 OTHER (Please specify)_____

57.)My cooperative has been through a state compliance review in the last three years.

1 NO

2 YES (year 19__)

Is there anything else you would like to comment on concerning special education in rural areas? If so, please feel free to use this space for that purpose.

Also, any comments you wish to make that you think may help in future efforts at understanding the difficulties inherent in providing special education services in rural areas will be appreciated either here or in a separate letter.

Your contribution to this effort is greatly appreciated. If you would like a summary of results, please print your name and address on the back of the return envelope (NOT on this questionnaire) and a summary will be sent to you.